

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 NEA-09 ISO-00 CIAE-00 PM-03 INR-07 L-02

ACDA-05 NSAE-00 PA-01 RSC-01 PRS-01 SP-02 USIA-06

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R 081610Z JAN 75
FM USMISSION NATO
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 9486
SECDEF WASHDC
INFO AMEMBASSY BONN
AMEMBASSY LISBON
AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV
USNMR SHAPE
USCINCEUR
CINCUSAFE

CONFIDENTIAL USNATO 0055

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PFOR, XF
SUBJECT: MIDDLE EAST: ARMS RE-SUPPLY TO ISREAL

REFS: STATE 000783, USNATO 7032 OF DEC 19, 1974

1. BOSS (FRG CHARGE) HAS JUST BROUGHT TO USNATO'S ATTENTION
FRONT-PAGE STORY 6 FRANKFURTER ALLGEMEINE WHICH
READS IN INFORMAL TRANSLATION AS FOLLOWS:

QUOTE:

WASHINGTON PLANS FOR NON-STOP SUPPLY OF ISREAL

SCHMIDT: NO PRESSURE ON BONN/RULES FOR THE USE OF AMERICAN
SUPPLY BASES

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RMC, BONN, JAN. 5. THE GERMAN GOVERNMENT IS CAREFULLY AVOIDING
TAKING PUBLIC POSITIONS ON HOW IT MIGHT REACT TO A REQUEST FROM
THE UNITED STATES FOR SUPPORT IN THE EVENT OF A NEW WAR BREAKING
OUT IN THE MIDDLE EAST. CHANCELLOR SCHMIDT SAID IN SPAIN THAT

HE DID NOT FEEL HE WAS A CHANCELLOR OF A WORLD POWER AND THEREFORE DID NOT WANT TO SPECULATE OPENLY ON THIS QUESTION. IN DER SPIEGEL HE EXPLAINED THAT HE KNEW OF NO PRESSURE OF THE AMERICANS ON THE BUNDESREPUBLIC TO MAKE HARBORS OR AIRFIELDS AVAILABLE FOR RESUPPLY OF ISRAEL IN CASE OF A NEW WAR BETWEEN JEWS AND ARABS. WE WOULD NOT AGREE TO IT."

THAT, HOWEVER, SURELY DOESN'T MEAN THAT BONN DOESN'T GIVE SOME THOUGHT TO WHAT A DILEMMA IT COULD FIND ITSELF IN. IT SHOULD BE ASKED ABOVE ALL WHETHER THE AMERICANS, AS IN THE OCTOBER WAR, WOULD AGAIN WANT TO USE THEIR BASES IN GERMANY FOR THE MILITARY RESUPPLY OF ISRAEL. IT IS LEARNED FROM DIPLOMATIC SOURCES THAT WASHINGTON HAS MADE ALL THE ADMINISTRATIVE ARRANGEMENTS FOR SUPPLYING ARMS AND OTHER GOODS TO ISRAEL BY A DIRECT AIR ROUTE WITHOUT INTERMEDIATE LANDINGS.

ACCORDING TO THIS INFORMATION, WASHINGTON NO LONGER STARTS OUT FROM ITS PREVIOUS CONSIDERATION OR ASSUMPTION THAT IT COULD COUNT ON USING WITHOUT RESTRICTIONS ITS AIR BASE IN THE AZORES IN CASE OF A NEW MIDDLE EAST WAR. AS EXPECTED, LAST FALL PORTUGAL DID INDEED EXTEND THE TREATY CONCERNED WITH THE AMERICAN AIR BASE. THE QUESTION, HOWEVER, OF WHETHER WASHINGTON HAS THE RIGHT (UNDER THIS TREATY) TO TRANSIT DEFINITE SUPPORT FOR ISRAEL BY WAY OF THIS ISLAND BASE REMAINED UNCLEAR SINCE THE TWO NATIONS WERE ADVOCATING CONTRARY POINTS OF VIEW. IN ORDER TO AVOID ANY CONFLICT WITH THE LEFT SOCIALIST MILITARY GOVERNMENT IN LISBON, THE AMERICANS MADE THEIR PLANS ACCORDING TO WHICH THE AZORES BASE WOULD NOT BE USED AS A TRANSIT STOP IN TRANSPORTING SUPPLIES FROM AMERICA TO ISRAEL. THEY INCREASED THE NUMBER OF KC-135 TANKER AIRCRAFT, WHICH ARE NEEDED FOR THE IN-FLIGHT REFUELING OF GIANT CARGO PLANES COMING FROM AMERICA OVER THE ATLANTIC TOWARD ISREAL.

HOWEVER, SINCE THE CAPACITY OF THIS TRANSPORT METHOD CANNOT BE INCREASED WITHOUT LIMIT THE AMERICANS MIGHT STILL TURN AGAIN TO THEIR EUROPEAN SUPPLY POINTS. AFTER THE SPECTACULAR SHIPPING OF AMERICAN ARMS FROM A GERMAN PORT ON SHIPS FLYING THE
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ISRAELI FLAG DURING THE LAST ISRAELI-ARAB WAR, THERE WERE HARSH WORDS BETWEEN BONN AND WASHINGTON. SINCE THE UNITED STATES IS ALSO INTERESTED IN AVOIDING SUCH INCIDENTS IN THE FUTURE, THEY (GERMANY AND THE U.S.) WORKED TOGETHER TO FORMULATE RULES FOR SUCH CASES. THEY SET FORTH CLEARLY THAT BONN WOULD TOLERATE THE USE OF AMERICAN BASES AND MATERIEL WHICH ARE IN THE BUNDESREPUBLIC IF WASHINGTON TAKES PAINS TO AVOID PUBLIC NOTICE. WHILE THE SHIPPING OF AMERICAN SUPPLIES FROM GERMANY ON VESSELS FLYING THE AMERICAN FLAG AND HAVING A VAGUELY-WORDED BILL OF LADING WOULD RAISE VERY LITTLE OBJECTION, AN INCREASED USE OF AMERICAN BASES IN GERMANY WOULD BE NOTICEABLE.

THIS SORT OF AGREEMENT WITH THE AMERICAN NATO PARTNER DOES NOT, IN BONN'S VIEW, CONTRADICT ITS POLICY OF EVENHANDEDNESS WHICH THE BUNDESREPUBLIC WANTS TO EXERCISE TOWARD ALL COUNTRIES OF THE MIDDLE EAST. IN THIS IT WILL BE SUPPORTED BY ALL THE FACTIONS REPRESENTED IN THE BUNDESTAG. UNQUOTE

2. IN ACCORDANCE WITH INSTRUCTIONS HE HAD RECEIVED FROM BONN FONOFF, BOSS INQUIRED WHETHER U.S. AND USAF HAD IN FACT WORKED OUT ADMINISTRATIVE AND OTHER ARRANGEMENTS FOR DIRECT, NONSTOP "AIR BRIDGE" OF MILITARY SUPPLIES FROM NORTH AMERICAN TO ISRAEL. BOSS NOTED IN THIS REGARD THAT FRANKFURTER ALLGEMEINE CORRESPONDENT HAD ATTRIBUTED THIS INFORMATION TO "DIPLOMATIC SOURCES." USNATO DCM SAID HE HAD NOT SEEN NEWSPAPER ARTICLE AND POSSESSED NO INFORMATION ON THE SUBJECT.

3. COMMENT: USNATO WOULD POINT OUT THAT A US BRIEFING TEAM WILL GIVE A PRESENTATION TO THE NORTH ATLANTIC COUNCIL (NAC) ON THE US STRATEGIC AIRLIFT CAPABILITY ON JANUARY 15, 1975. IT WOULD APPEAR LIKELY THAT THE QUESTION ASKED BY BOSS MIGHT COME FROM NATO PERMREPS DURING THE US AIRLIFT PRESENTATION. MISSION RECOMMENDS THAT WASHINGTON CONSIDER THE POLITICAL IMPLICATIONS OF ANY RESPONSE TO SUCH A QUESTION AND FORMULATE POSSIBLE ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS OF THIS TYPE IN ADVANCE OF BRIEFING. END COMMENT.

4. REQUEST WASHINGTON COMMENT BY COB JANUARY 13.

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To: STATE
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LISBON
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